

§ 3.156 New and material evidence.

(a) A claimant may reopen a finally adjudicated claim by submitting new and material evidence. New evidence means existing evidence not previously submitted to agency decisionmakers. Material evidence means existing evidence that, by itself or when considered with previous evidence of record, relates to an unestablished fact necessary to substantiate the claim. New and material evidence can be neither cumulative nor redundant of the evidence of record at the time of the last prior final denial of the claim sought to be reopened, and must raise a reasonable possibility of substantiating the claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501, 5103A(f), 5108)

(b) New and material evidence received prior to the expiration of the appeal period, or prior to the appellate decision if a timely appeal has been filed (including evidence received prior to an appellate decision and referred to the agency of original jurisdiction by the Board of Veterans Appeals without consideration in that decision in accordance with the provisions of § 20.1304(b)(1) of this chapter), will be considered as having been filed in connection with the claim which was pending at the beginning of the appeal period.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(c) Where the new and material evidence consists of a supplemental report from the service department, received before or after the decision has become final, the former decision will be reconsidered by the adjudicating agency of original jurisdiction. This comprehends official service department records which presumably have been misplaced and have now been located and forwarded to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also included are corrections by the service department of former errors of commission or omission in the preparation of the prior report or reports and identified as such. The retroactive evaluation of disability resulting from disease or injury subsequently service connected on the basis of the new evidence from the service department must be supported adequately by

medical evidence. Where such records clearly support the assignment of a specific rating over a part or the entire period of time involved, a retroactive evaluation will be assigned accordingly except as it may be affected by the filing date of the original claim.

CROSS REFERENCES: Effective dates—general. See § 3.400. Correction of military records. See § 3.400(g).

[27 FR 11887, Dec. 1, 1962, as amended at 55 FR 20148, May 15, 1990; 55 FR 52275, Dec. 21, 1990; 58 FR 32443, June 10, 1993; 66 FR 45630, Aug. 29, 2001]

§ 3.157 Report of examination or hospitalization as claim for increase or to reopen.

(a) *General.* Effective date of pension or compensation benefits, if otherwise in order, will be the date of receipt of a claim or the date when entitlement arose, whichever is the later. A report of examination or hospitalization which meets the requirements of this section will be accepted as an informal claim for benefits under an existing law or for benefits under a liberalizing law or Department of Veterans Affairs issue, if the report relates to a disability which may establish entitlement. Acceptance of a report of examination or treatment as a claim for increase or to reopen is subject to the requirements of § 3.114 with respect to action on Department of Veterans Affairs initiative or at the request of the claimant and the payment of retroactive benefits from the date of the report or for a period of 1 year prior to the date of receipt of the report.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 5110(a))

(b) *Claim.* Once a formal claim for pension or compensation has been allowed or a formal claim for compensation disallowed for the reason that the service-connected disability is not compensable in degree, receipt of one of the following will be accepted as an informal claim for increased benefits or an informal claim to reopen. In addition, receipt of one of the following will be accepted as an informal claim in the case of a retired member of a uniformed service whose formal claim for pension or compensation has been disallowed because of receipt of retirement pay. The evidence listed will also

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be accepted as an informal claim for pension previously denied for the reason the disability was not permanently and totally disabling.

(1) *Report of examination or hospitalization by Department of Veterans Affairs or uniformed services.* The date of outpatient or hospital examination or date of admission to a VA or uniformed services hospital will be accepted as the date of receipt of a claim. The date of a uniformed service examination which is the basis for granting severance pay to a former member of the Armed Forces on the temporary disability retired list will be accepted as the date of receipt of claim. The date of admission to a non-VA hospital where a veteran was maintained at VA expense will be accepted as the date of receipt of a claim, if VA maintenance was previously authorized; but if VA maintenance was authorized subsequent to admission, the date VA received notice of admission will be accepted. The provisions of this paragraph apply only when such reports relate to examination or treatment of a disability for which service-connection has previously been established or when a claim specifying the benefit sought is received within one year from the date of such examination, treatment or hospital admission.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(2) *Evidence from a private physician or layman.* The date of receipt of such evidence will be accepted when the evidence furnished by or in behalf of the claimant is within the competence of the physician or lay person and shows the reasonable probability of entitlement to benefits.

(3) *State and other institutions.* When submitted by or on behalf of the veteran and entitlement is shown, date of receipt by the Department of Veterans Affairs of examination reports, clinical records, and transcripts of records will be accepted as the date of receipt of a claim if received from State, county, municipal, recognized private institutions, or other Government hospitals (except those described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section). These records must be authenticated by an appropriate official of the institution. Benefits will be granted if the records are

adequate for rating purposes; otherwise findings will be verified by official examination. Reports received from private institutions not listed by the American Hospital Association must be certified by the Chief Medical Officer of the Department of Veterans Affairs or physician designee.

[26 FR 1571, Feb. 24, 1961, as amended at 27 FR 4421, May 9, 1962; 31 FR 12055, Sept. 15, 1966; 40 FR 56434, Dec. 3, 1975; 52 FR 27340, July 21, 1987; 60 FR 27409, May 24, 1995]

§ 3.158 Abandoned claims.

(a) *General.* Except as provided in § 3.652 of this part, where evidence requested in connection with an original claim, a claim for increase or to reopen or for the purpose of determining continued entitlement is not furnished within 1 year after the date of request, the claim will be considered abandoned. After the expiration of 1 year, further action will not be taken unless a new claim is received. Should the right to benefits be finally established, pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or monetary allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 based on such evidence shall commence not earlier than the date of filing the new claim.

(Authority: 38 U.S.C. 501)

(b) *Department of Veterans Affairs examinations.* Where the veteran fails without adequate reason to respond to an order to report for Department of Veterans Affairs examination within 1 year from the date of request and payments have been discontinued, the claim for such benefits will be considered abandoned.

(c) *Disappearance.* Where payments of pension, compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or monetary allowance under the provisions of 38 U.S.C. chapter 18 have not been made or have been discontinued because a payee's present whereabouts is unknown, payments will be resumed effective the day following the date of last payment if entitlement is otherwise established, upon receipt of a valid current address.

CROSS REFERENCES: Periodic certification of continued eligibility. See § 3.652. Failure